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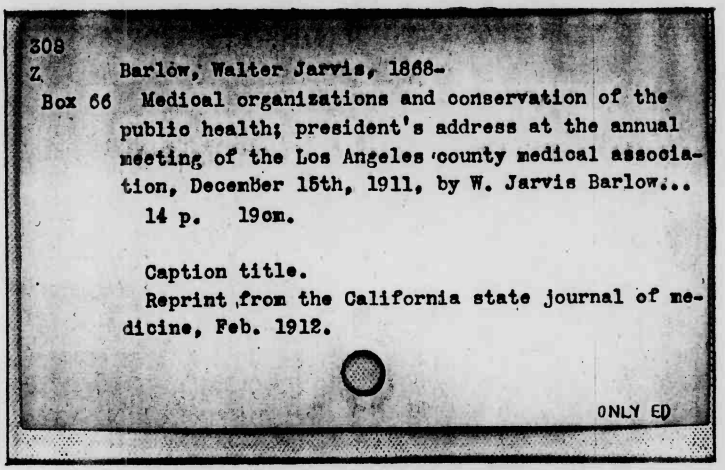
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MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONSERVATION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

President's Address at the Annual Meeting of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, December 15th, 1911.

By W. JARVIS BARLOW, M. D., Los Angeles.

Conscious of a high trust and mindful of greater happiness, the men and women of the medical profession have ever stood for the betterment of human conditions. They have accomplished humanitarian work through personal efforts, unselfish actions, over-work, with or without remuneration, visiting the rich and the poor, by constructive work for the relief of suffering through hospitals, dispensaries, health camps, settlements and the several relief organizations in one way or another to make life easier, healthier and better and to help a universal need—the prevention of disease. As individuals they stand well and are respected by their neighbors, friends and the community; but collectively or as an organized body they seem to hold, at the present time, a different and somewhat unpopular position. Honor and appreciation of altruistic endeavor, are rarely accorded and should not be expected by those who act from the highest motives.

When this Society chose its President one year

ago, he was deeply moved with gratitude for so great an honor conferred on one who felt he had accomplished too little to deserve it. These twelve short months have given much pleasure mixed with extra duties to him who has tried to devote his best thought and energy to this organization.

The conservation of health, modern or preventive medicine and the relation of the County Society to public health, are subjects that are most important to the evolution of American Medicine, and a number of reasons exist why such topics are particularly pertinent at this time.

Prevention of disease has made its great strides in the last thirty years, in which time the organisms causing the different diseases were discovered. The years 1880-1890 gave us the bacillus of typhoid, of tuberculosis, of diphtheria, of tetanus, of cholera and the coccus of pneumonia, two years later influenza, and plague in 1894. Having the true causes of diseases, the profession began intelligently to instruct the public in their prevention. A few years brought the greater triumphs of prevention of malaria and yellow fever, and by sanitary measures of prevention transformed pest and disease-breeding places into new cities of health, life and work.

Measures taken for prevention of disease and protection of public health are absolutely identical, and as one is furthered so is the other fostered, because, if precautions that scientific medicine gives are to be successfully carried out, it is necessary to have the support of the public. The results for the public health, through prevention of disease, can only be obtained with the help of those outside the profession who are educated or who have been sufficiently instructed

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in the causes of disease. While ignorance of real scientific facts exists among the people, there will always be resistance to any legislation which seemingly curtails personal liberty.

Limitation of personal liberty in America meets with resistance from all classes and especially from those who are ignorant of the fact that such limitation by law is for the good of the majority. This is shown in many ways by the disregard for law and, often, disrespect for those in authority. It is depressing to feel that lawlessness has become an evil in our American life and has produced such results that each vocation and profession has to carry its share of extra burdens.

Existing reasons for considering this subject at this time are:

(1) National. The bill introduced into Congress by Senator Robert L. Owen, of Oklahoma, provides for a concentration of all bureaus dealing with vital resources—a National Board of Public Health.

(2) Local. The marked activity of those who may be termed theoretical anti-sanitarians and objectors to any legislation to protect the public health.

First, National. Leaders for higher standards in any vocation and those who urge stricter laws of government curtailing the personal liberty of the individual for any cause, even for the safeguard of the many, become more or less unpopular and in consequence resistance is quite natural. The animosity in general at the present time against the medical profession and its largest representation, The American Medical Association, may thus in part find explanation. The American Medical Association, with its state and county

branches, have been the factors in putting better health laws upon the statute books and in the production of better qualified men and women who are practicing the healing art. It is natural that those who are hurt or generally disqualified should strengthen their opposition by adding to their number the misguided and ignorant, forming themselves into a league of so-called "medical freedom."

It is a well known fact that the thoroughly trained and well educated along all scientific lines make no complaint of injustice or infringement on their individual liberty or rights as citizens. There is no question that the medical profession, as has been stated, has not been treated with courtesy or fairness by those people allied with the so-called "League for Medical Freedom," and who are against a National Board of Health, because abuse and lies have been hurled at the profession from various sides, with the object of increasing any unpopularity that already exists. On the other hand it is well known and can safely be upheld that the medical profession has made no attack on any set for its religious or spiritual views, but when any person or set of people offend the general welfare or cause the breaking down of barriers protecting the public health, an attack by the profession must be made if it is to be true to its vocation.

Added to the anti-sanitarians and those who disregard infectious and contagious diseases, there are the malicious objectors, who wish a continuance of existing conditions for selfish purposes. The more discussion on this subject, the more publicity given, the greater understanding produced and the more questions asked, the sooner will the people learn and the public know the advantages. Only through

instruction of the individual and education of the ignorant will such a bureau become a reality.

Those responsible for the government of the United States can be trusted to conduct a national department of health honestly, squarely and broadly, just as they are trusted to carry on other departments of the government.

In a message to Congress, December, 1910, President Taft says:

"In my message of last year I recommended the creation of a Bureau of Health, in which should be embraced all those government agencies outside of the War and Navy departments which are now directed toward the preservation of public health or exercise functions germane to that subject. I renew this recommendation. I greatly regret that the agitation in favor of this bureau has aroused a counter agitation against its creation, on the ground that the establishment of such a bureau is to be in the interest of a particular school of medicine. It seems to me that this assumption is wholly unwarranted, and those responsible for the government can be trusted to secure in the personnel of the bureau the appointment of representatives of all recognized schools of medicine, and in the management of the bureau entire freedom from narrow prejudice in this regard."

Our national, state and county medical societies all stand for the protection of public health and for any measure that will best attain this end. None of these measures are concerned with the treatment, or with any school of so-called treatment, and Senator Owen's bill has nothing whatever to do with the treatment of disease.

The federal government or Congress has no juirsdiction whatever over the practice of medicine in the several states. Any belief or faith in sectarian

medicine, cults or fads for the treatment of the sick cannot be interfered with through the creation of a National Board of Health. Freedom for treatment of disease may be as great as ever and each state should settle that question for itself. Anyone should have the right to select whom he chooses to treat his case, provided, however, that such a person has been licensed in the healing art by the state in which he resides. Limit only the right to care for the sick, irrespective of any school of healing art, to those who have sufficient knowledge and the necessary training to safeguard the patient and the public.

The enforcement of a state law regarding the qualifications of practitioners of the healing art is of the greatest possible importance, the neglect of which produces poorly educated and inadequately trained sectarian physicians who practice and trade upon the reputations and higher qualifications of others. This is now left to the State Board of Medical Examiners and will not be changed by the creation of a National Board of Health.

Second, Local. The marked activity of Christian Scientists and others who compose the so-called "League of Medical Freedom," not only on account of their anti-medical views, but also because of their political activity in relation to the physical inspection of school children, thrusts upon this Society an obligation to inform the public of its danger.

The study of the mind and its complex operation has been really neglected by medical colleges and continues to be disregarded by the profession, chiefly through lack of training and example from the older practitioners; such and like evils are neither sufficiently recognized nor remedied, with the result that much treatment is left to reformers or irregular healers. *When physicians are consultants*

for both mind and body, there will be no need of Christian Science or allied false science. A belief or faith that brings improved conditions of health to a suffering individual, or makes a nervous invalid feel strong and well, deserves our careful and serious consideration. That Christian Science can do this for many who embrace its faith, none who have conscientiously considered the matter will deny. Faith is the dominant note that produces the harmony and may be simply regarded as the natural attitude which, as such, enters into all modern, scientific psychotherapy. As conscientious men and women of the healing art truly understand this and live it through their actions, thoughts and words, their patients need never lack for the sympathy and help now sought through irregular channels. *More spiritual and moral uplift, and less materialism through example of living, are needed among us, that a greater faith and trust result.*

Mental and Christian Science, Faith Cure, Spiritual Healing, Lourdes or St. Anne de Beaupre accomplish similar results under like conditions and methods. That science and religion can work together for the prevention of sickness, distress and suffering, no man or woman of the healing art can deny, but a religion that refuses the help which science has discovered through scientific and unselfish investigation of the cause of disease, is forever a hindrance and menace to the prevention of disease and suffering humanity.

This question of Christian Science should not, perhaps, be taken too seriously, for the people may well be trusted to do in time what is right for the general good, but inasmuch as one of our United States Senators (unfortunately) from our own section, Senator Works) has taken so prominent a

part in this discussion, it is right for this Society to have taken action.

As an illustration of what may be accomplished by united action on the part of the profession may be mentioned the fact that in a signed statement issued by Mrs. Craig and Mr. Blight a day or two before the election, they say that they "favor the strict observance of sanitary and quarantine regulations, and of proper measures for the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases," and that "the board should devise and maintain such inspection of the children and the conditions in the public schools as shall protect the well child and be of the greatest assistance to the ill or defective child." They add that they "favor an investigation of the operation of medical examination in the large cities of the country so that we may adopt the best methods in use in other cities . . . that we may bring up our department of health and development to a high state of efficiency."

Public Health Work to be More Effective.—Our national association before and during its meetings each year has inaugurated a series of health lectures and addresses for the general public. These were begun last year at Los Angeles and many citizens of this county learned much of real value about the prevention of disease and keeping one's health by the right way of living. To augment this, a section of this Society should be started, with meetings once a month, to include all those laymen and women who are working for the physical welfare of this community. Certain members of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Housing Commission, settlement workers, school teachers, tuberculosis societies and all social workers should be included. A special or modified membership could be given, so that these workers in the

field of the prevention of disease might feel themselves a part of, and in sympathy with, the medical profession in so far as the work relates to public health. Such a plan was suggested in the chairman's address in the Section on Preventive Medicine and Public Health of the American Medical Association in Los Angeles last June. He says: "Every county medical society should inaugurate sections to take up different divisions of welfare work and should give a modified membership in their society to all local workers for physical welfare."

Under social work is included church societies, non-sectarian associations, or any organization that assists in helping people into better conditions of living. Such work is closely allied to medical and health work, and all medical work is akin to sociology. The problems of each can best be solved working hand in hand. This complex modern life, to be made more livable and homelike through the coming era of modern medicine, will work out plans through social and medical science, both of which must work together for the right solution.

The life of such a social section of the Society would then be increased by having, at stated intervals and during meetings of our State Society, public lectures and addresses on matters pertaining to public health, given by both physicians and laymen. Money would be needed to undertake such a programme in so far only as a salaried man would be necessary to direct and form the programme. Sufficient professional men could be obtained for giving these lectures and addresses without remuneration, but it would doubtless be necessary to have a salaried man to attend to the details. This County Society could well afford to start such a series for the good of our community.

Through this section additional support would be

given the county and state societies in putting out of business the large number of unlicensed practitioners who practice in defiance of the law, and those licensed hypocrites who are breaking the laws of God and man by illegitimate practicing as was brought out by Mr. Morrow, attorney for the State Board, at our recent meeting.

The profession is too busy with its daily duties and care of the sick to do that which is necessary to bring the correct information before the public. Everyone finds individuals hungry for the truths of medical science and of measures for the prevention of disease. Even the one fact that there is nothing whatever in the Owen Bill which relates to the treatment of disease or to any school of medicine, has added to the names of those in favor of a National Board of Health many who by a wrong int rpretation had misunderstood the truth. We can thus do much as individuals, but, as an organization, a salaried man must be secured to properly conduct any campaign. In this regard there is a constantly growing demand for professional men to assume prominent positions in health matters, and it will doubtless be necessary for medical schools to create a department of instruction in public health. Recognizing this demand, instruction leading directly to the position of health officer is now given at many of our leading universities, i. e., Harvard, Columbia, Ann Arbor, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, with other universities preparing for these courses.

The great mass of people must by force and authority of law be educated into hygienic living and obedience to sanitary regulations. It is unfortunate that the majority of our city boards of health are handicapped by lack of authority to enforce their laws and lack of funds for pushing the necessary work of prevention. A standard set by a National

Health Boa1d would help the situation of every state and city board.

The American people can be trusted to do the right thing when the proper time comes. What is right must prevail and what is truth will endure from whatsoever source right and truth may come. It is our duty, therefore, to continue a conscientious campaign of instruction and education for that which, through scientific training in the causes and prevention of disease, we believe is for the public good and welfare.

More Effective Organization of the Profession.— We have heard much this past year about better organization of our profession. This has come not only from medical sources, but from lay brothers who can well be trusted and who know something of the value of the work done by medical members. Certainly we do not need to organize, but to make our present organization more effective through the development of our local societies, the functions of which might be stated as follows:

First. To unite with members in harmonious fellowship.

Second. For scientific discussions; papers expressing the clinical experiences of each, giving any new facts; the presentation of cases or pathological specimens, and as such, the Society stands for the highest clinical institution in the form of a postgraduate course.

Third. Developing its home and its home's appointments.

The functions of the first and second groups have been performed continuously since the foundation of our Society forty years ago, more or less successfully, as its officers and members have shown interest and given of their best thought. Unquestionably

much progress has been made in the last three years, and with the enthusiasm and inspiration of the young, well-trained members, a bright future for harmonious fellowship and scientific work seems assured.

It is the third function, that of its home and appointments, I wish to emphasize. The home has certainly been neglected. The Los Angeles County Society should own its building or rooms which at any time might be extended as money is provided. Many societies and organizations of this city which are mere infants compared with our Medical Society, have each at the present time their own home and equipment, and yet do not clothe, feed or protect their members as a home of this Society could do. The special appointments of the home referred to are: access to a medical library and museum. Where the Society has its home there should the library be situated, as a medical library is the most important asset of a growing and united profession or society. As the library has been earlier developed, the home of the profession should have close connection with it. Discord, mistrust and jealousy must be put aside to attain what is best for the greatest number and for the highest development of a medical unit in Southern California. The time has come for us to make the best use of what has been already planted here by uniting to the Medical Society that which will add to its dignity and usefulness.

The other appointment referred to is a pathological museum. A good beginning by the profession here has been evidenced by the receipt of the first prize last spring given by the American Medical Association. Through an adjoining building to the home a compact group could well be made of the three buildings, namely: society rooms, library and

museum, of which the members of this Society could well be proud, and in which the profession of the West with envy would rejoice.

Many advantages that seem at first luxuries become in time actual necessities. This is true in the commercial life as well as in the professional life. For this Society to-day to have easy access to an indexed library or pathological museum, would safely be thought advantageous, and to-morrow for it to be deprived of either would actually interfere with its very soul and life.

Holmes in one of his essays put it thus: "Our practitioners need a library—for with all their skill and devotion there is too little erudition such as a liberal profession should be able to claim for many of its members. They must clear up this unilluminated atmosphere and here is the true electric light which will irradiate its darkness."

Colleagues, this can be accomplished in a short time through unanimous agreement, and by burying the smallness of opposition that may arise through individual jealousies or prejudices, an accomplishment that would please and prosper the future members of this Society, and attainable with less expense to our present members, because the state has already committed itself to help and further the interest of medical education and the profession of this section, in so far as the people and medical men of Southern California show their strength of purpose toward that end. All effort for others, advantages and help given to our brothers here now or to those who come after, bring the greatest satisfaction and pleasure and make this short life worth the while.

I wish to extend to each member of this Society best wishes and appreciation for their attendance, support and loyalty at the meetings, especially to those who have attended to and made the scientific

programs a success; to the members who gave the series on the History of Medicine, and to those who presented each month the Current Literature; to the Councilors, my gratitude for attendance at meetings, and for timely aid as needed in conducting the business affairs. To the man who by unceasing, unselfish, untiring and constant toil has developed this Society, its progress, its Bulletin, and the best that it stands for to-day—Dr. Kress, our secretary —my thanks and appreciation are gladly acknowledged.

Members, as President I bid you farewell and God-speed.

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